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Analyzing the Attitudes, Beliefs, and Practices of Breastfeeding Women at Maternity Care Coalition

Angela Heysel, Conor Bradley, Naima Black*, Galissa Jones*

Introduction: Breastfeeding is essential for health and bonding within the mother-child dyad. Most guidelines, therefore, suggest women continue breastfeeding up to twelve months post-partum. Discrepancies in achieving this exist across zip codes and race in Philadelphia, despite high overall rates of breastfeeding. Our research goal is to understand these discrepancies and the relationship between attitudes and practices of breastfeeding Philadelphia women, in order to target them with breastfeeding resource.

Methods: General population data was collected via an online survey taken by residents of Philadelphia and the surrounding counties, whereas the focus group survey was taken in-person by Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) clients. Demographic information was recorded. Both surveys addressed women's attitudes towards breastfeeding; the focus group survey also included breastfeeding practices and resource preferences. SPSS was used for data analysis.

Results: Initial findings from the general population survey show positive to strongly positive attitudes toward breastfeeding. Participants reported a positive attitude toward public breastfeeding. Most participants believed that formula and breastmilk are not equally good. Data analysis is pending regarding significant differences in breastfeeding attitudes by zip code and race, as is focus group survey analysis regarding preferred breastfeeding resources.

Conclusion: Because the results of the general population data demonstrate prevailingly positive attitudes toward breastfeeding, the resource developed by the Breastfeeding Taskforce at MCC will likely address disparities in breastfeeding rates among racial groups and zip code by engaging with barriers to initiating and sustaining breastfeeding, as opposed to addressing public perception. Future research includes evaluating the proposed resource's success.